COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Housing Stability Services Request for Proposals

January 21, 2022

MINNESOTA HOUSING

Minnesota Housing | mnhousing.gov

- This session is being recorded and will be posted publicly.

- We will leave time at the end for questions. Today's answers offered are preliminary. Final answers will be posted on Minnesota Housing's Multifamily Grants Program page.

  - Please mute your line unless you are speaking. Webinar audio controls are orange when muted.

  - Please do not put your line on hold, as this may trigger hold music.
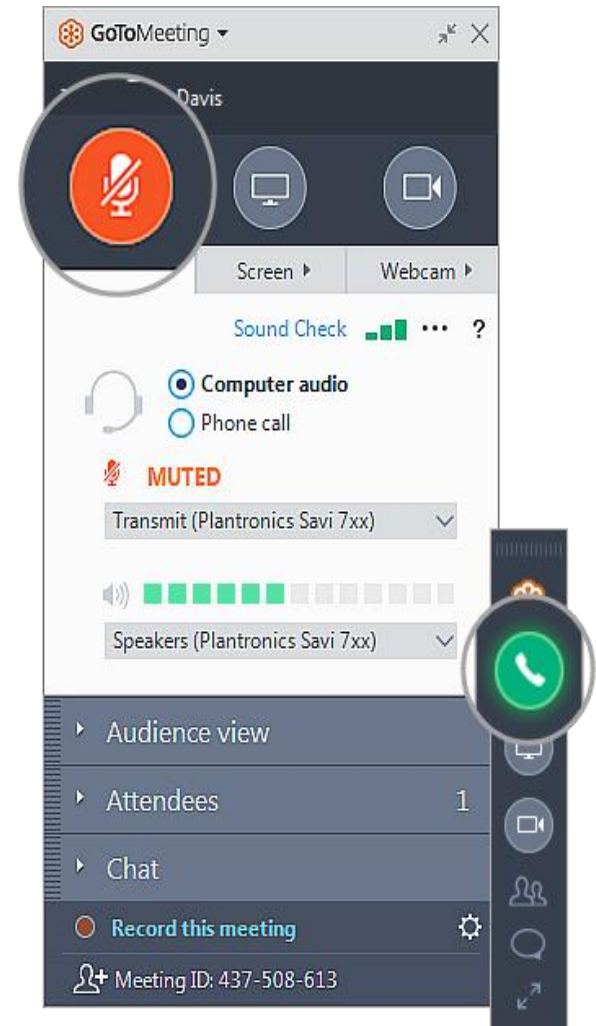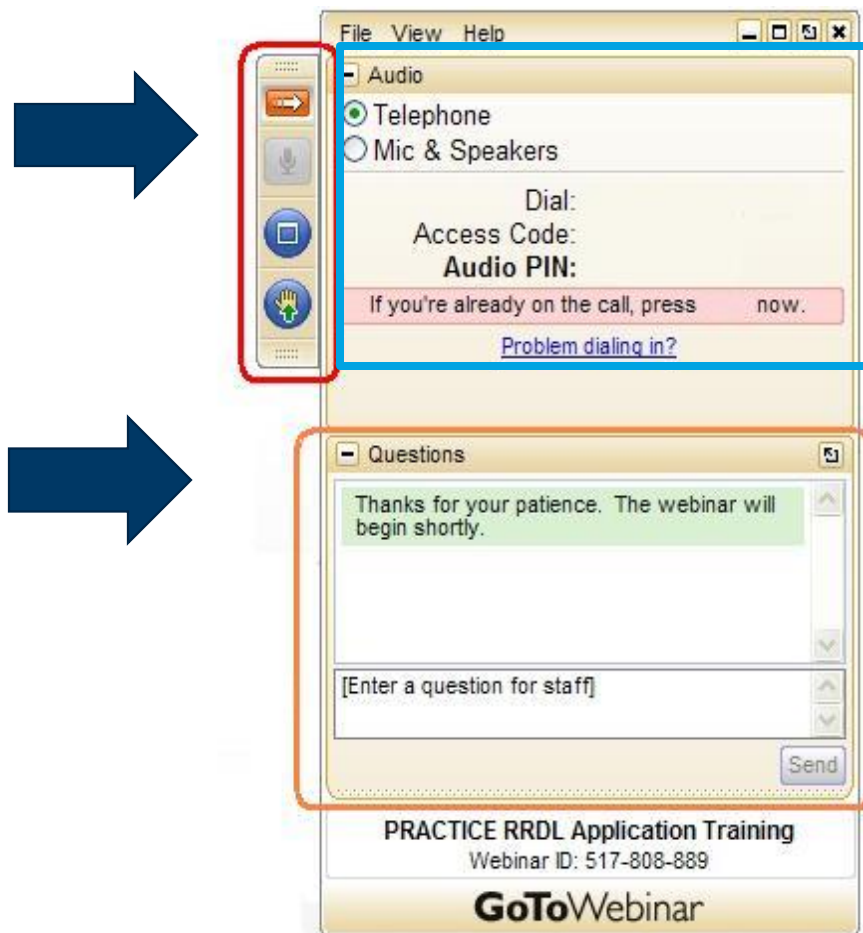
Our Mission:
The Core Purpose

Housing is the foundation for success, so we collaborate with individuals, communities and partners to create, preserve and finance housing that is affordable.

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions

- Program Overview

- Eligible Applicants and Recipients

- Stakeholder Engagement

- Eligible Services; Eligible/Ineligible Expenses

- Application Scoring and Review Criteria

- Application Submission and Timeline

- Questions

Program Overview

- Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury

  - American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 enacted in March 2021 provided additional funds for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA 2)

    - Carving out up to $9 million in funding for Housing Stability Services

Program Overview

Up to $9 million

- Anticipated awards
  - Between $300,000 – $700,000 for multiple organizations applying as a collaborative
  - Between $100,000 – $300,000 for individual organizations

- Funding Period: June 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023
  - May be extended at the discretion of Minnesota Housing depending on funding availability and program performance

Program Overview

- Despite the similar name, this Housing Stability Services Program is wholly different and completely unrelated to the newly established [Housing Stabilization Services](#) benefit administered by Minnesota's Department of Human Services.

- The goal of this program is to **increase services** statewide to prevent and reduce experiences of homelessness for individuals and families.

- Housing Stability Services funding **may not be used** for any direct housing expenses such as rent, mortgage, utilities, or other housing related costs.

Eligible applicants include:

- Nonprofit/community-based organizations (including legal services organizations)

- Federally recognized tribes in Minnesota

- Local units of government (cities, counties, PHAs, HRAs) that operate as a central resource for housing assistance and will have staff perform this work in the field, such as in homes, businesses, and/or community centers

Collaborative applications including those from Continuum of Care regions or tribal nations, are encouraged.

Eligible Applicants

Applicant geographic area of coverage must include one of the following:

- The entire state of Minnesota

- One or more Continuum of Care regions

- One or more Community Action Program (CAP) regions

- One or more metro counties

- One or more Minnesota Indian reservations/ communities

- One or more cities with populations over 85,000 (Minneapolis, St. Paul, Rochester, Bloomington, and Duluth)

Eligible Recipients

Eligible Recipients:

- Renter households in Minnesota

- Household income is at or below 80% of area median income (AMI)

- Household member is at risk for housing instability or homelessness

- Household member qualified for unemployment or had a decrease in income or increase in expenses

Stakeholder Engagement

How did we determine what services to make eligible under this RFP?

<u>You</u> told us.

Stakeholder Engagement
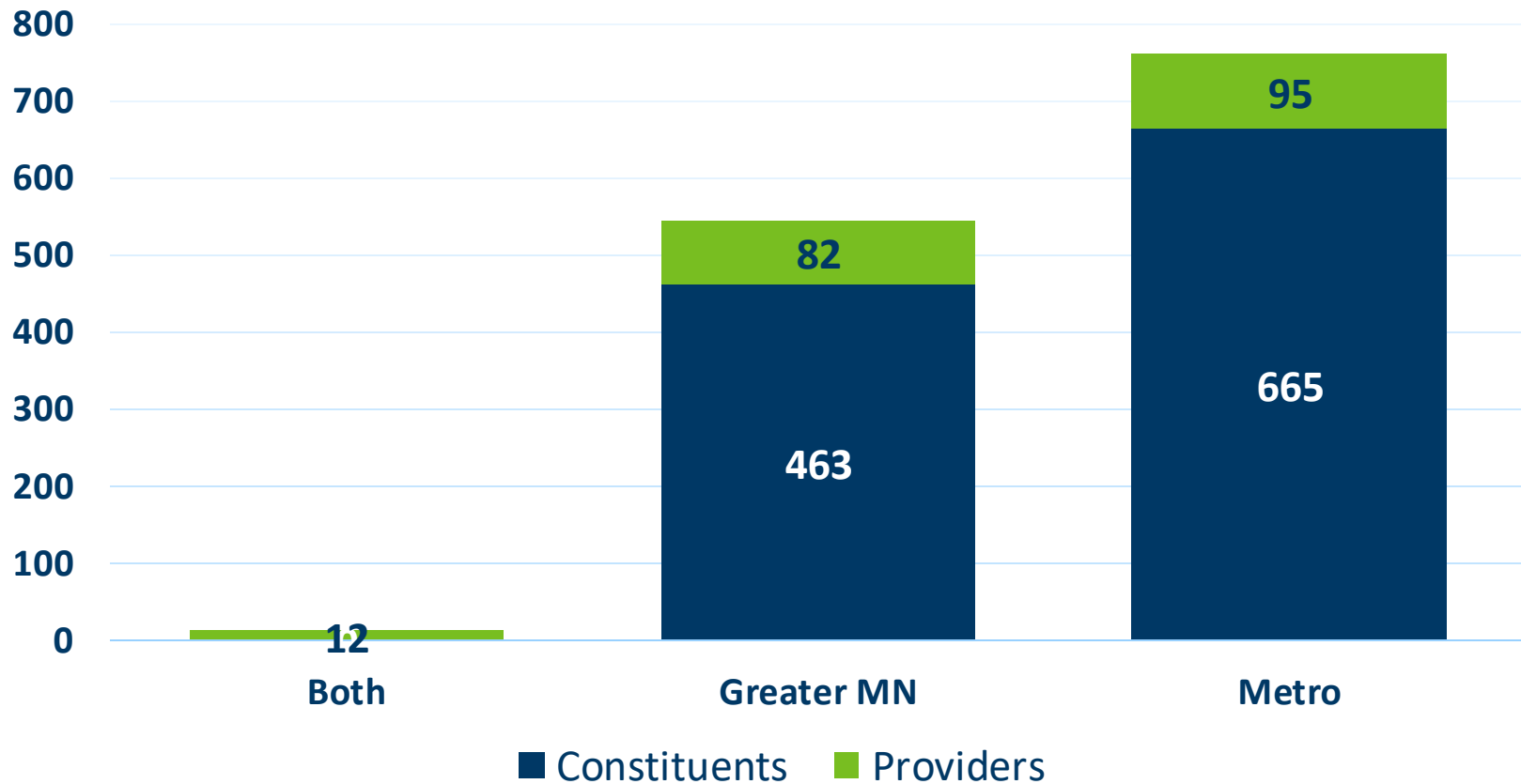
Two Surveys (1305 responses)

- Survey #1 with service providers and community partners seeking feedback on service needs and capacity (total 177 responses)

- Survey #2 with individuals/constituents who have experienced a housing crisis at some point (total 1,128 responses)

Focus Group Conversations

- People with lived experience (Greater MN and Metro)

- Culturally specific/domestic violence providers

- Continuum of Care (CoC) and Minnesota Tribal Collaborative

Stakeholder Engagement

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY GEOGRAPHY

Stacked bar chart showing Constituents (dark blue) and Providers (green):
- Both: Constituents (not labeled), Providers 12
- Greater MN: Constituents 463, Providers 82
- Metro: Constituents 665, Providers 95

Legend: ■ Constituents ■ Providers

Stakeholder Engagement

SERVICES MOST NEEDED – ALL RESPONDENTS

Service	Constituents	Providers
% Eviction Prevention	46.8%	46%
% Housing Navigators	43.5%	45.5%
% Housing Counseling	39.6%	11.1%
% Case Management	35.1%	43.9%
% Mediation	28.5%	22.2%
% Disability or Sr. Services	23.8%	18%
% Services for Survivors	15.5%	23.3%
% Fair Housing Counseling	14.9%	.6%
% Legal Service	14.9%	16.4%
% Other	9.6%	13.8%

■ Constituents ■ Providers
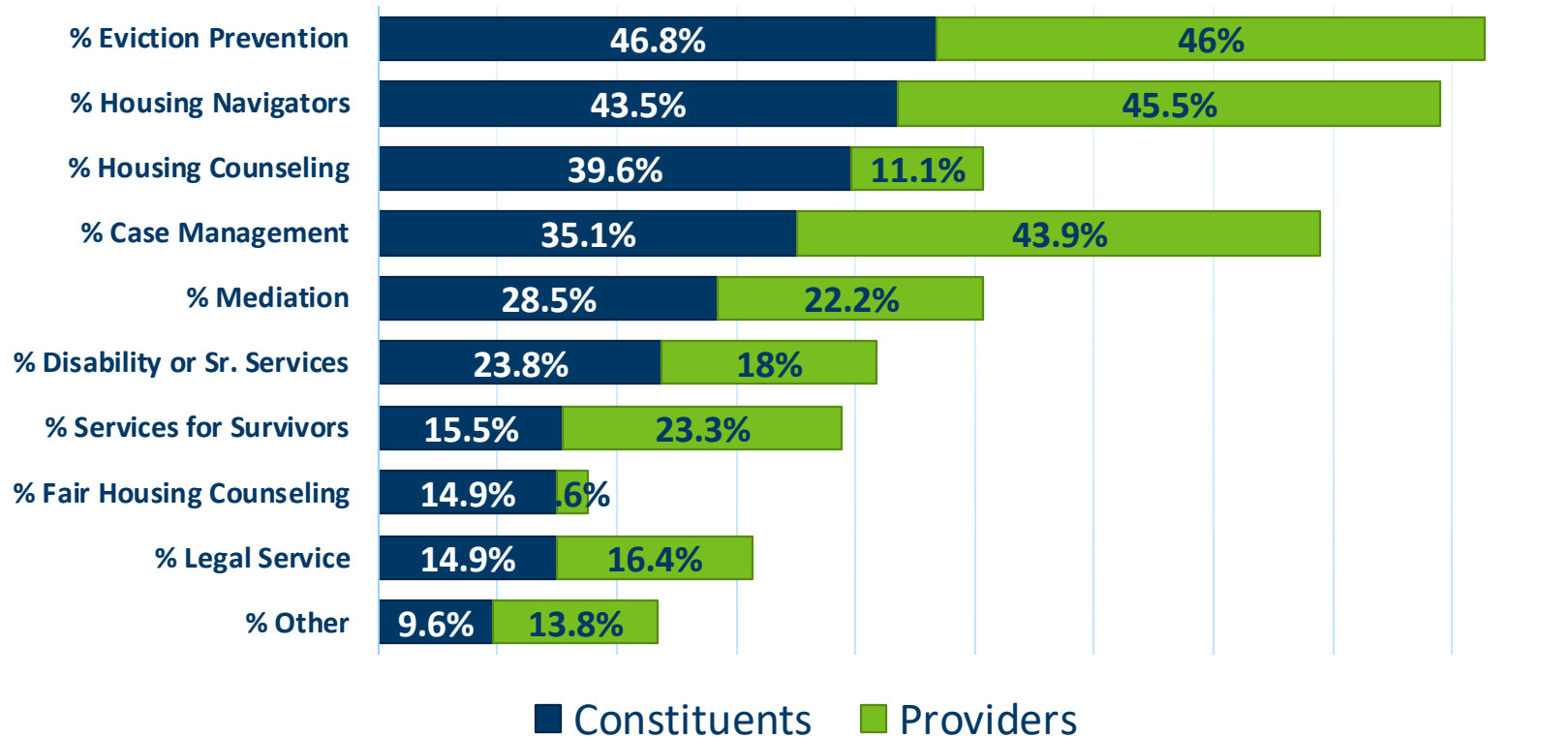
Constituent Survey Narrative

- Overwhelming emphasis on the value and importance of offering support with patience, empathy, respect, and dignity

- 'Follow-up and follow-through' are keys to resolving the crisis and stabilizing the housing

- Noticeable number of responses about communication and having a user-friendly and timely/efficient process

1. **Eviction Prevention**

- Services and support to households at imminent risk of homelessness, including those who are sharing housing with other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship (doubled up)

- Eviction Diversion – preventing homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate, alternative housing arrangements

Eligible Services

Activities related to eviction prevention services include:

- **Outreach and engagement:** Connect with people not currently accessing services

- **Assessment:** Work collaboratively with the person to identify strengths, resources, barriers, and needs in the context of their local environment

- **Connection:** Obtain for the individual necessary mainstream services, benefits, treatment, legal services, and supports

- **Coordination**: Bring together all the service providers in order to integrate services and help ensure consistency of service plans

- **Housing counseling**: Provide services to the person, including budget counseling and tenant education

- **Conflict mediation:** Provide proactive engagement and mediation services with landlords

- **Personal and legal advocacy:** Intercede on behalf of the person or group to help ensure access to timely and appropriate services

- **Follow-up**: Maintain contact with the person/household after completion of services to track stability and provide additional services, if needed

2. Housing Navigation

- Housing navigators assist households experiencing homelessness or housing instability to find or attain safe, stable housing

- While generally short-term, housing navigation services are meant to be intensive in nature and involves frequent contact with the household

- Goes well beyond the simple provision of providing housing listings

Eligible Services

Activities related to housing navigation services include:

- **Landlord recruitment**, including outreach to an existing network of landlords

- **Utilizing housing search engines** to locate housing opportunities

- **Assisting survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking** with housing related services

- **Maintaining ongoing communication with landlords** to engage, maintain a positive relationship with, and mitigate any issues that may arise

- **Assisting households in completing** housing applications

- **Transportation** assistance

- **Assisting households in communicating** to a potential landlord any housing barriers

- **Providing tenant education** on landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities

- **Referrals for direct assistance** such as application fees, rental deposit, or rental assistance

- **Following up with households** to track stability and provide additional services after exiting the program, as requested by the household

Identification of Households in Need of Assistance

Marketing and Outreach

- **Applicants are encouraged to employ strategies to reach households overrepresented among those experiencing housing instability:**

  - Indigenous households

  - Black households

  - Households of color

  - People with disabilities

  - Veterans

  - Those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning/queer (LGBTQ)

  - While such outreach may target certain populations, a grantee must serve any eligible household who requests service

Identification of Households in Need of Assistance

Referrals from community partners may include:

- United Way 211

- Coordinated Entry

- Other

Eligible Program Related Expenses

- Salary and benefits

- Mileage or travel costs to assist participants

- Office/computer/phone for staff providing services to households (note that costs allocated must align with the staffing full time equivalent (FTE) assigned to the grant)

- Training of staff for program activities

- Marketing/outreach (materials, advertising, etc.)

- Technology

- Personal protective equipment

- Other program related costs, as approved by Minnesota Housing

Eligible Expenses

Administration (limited to 15% of total grant)

- Audit/accounting

- Human resources

- Office/computer/phone for administrative staff

- Other direct costs associated with administering the program (e.g., financial, program management, data/reporting costs), as approved by Minnesota Housing

Ineligible Expenses

- Direct assistance such as payment for rent, mortgage, utilities, or other housing related costs are **not** eligible expenses

Funds are for services only

Application Scoring and Review Criteria

Scoring- 100 points

- Project Design   25 points

- Capacity   25 points

- Equity   40 points

- Budget   10 points

  Total   **100 points**

Program Design

- Program clearly describes how services were determined, and the number of households estimated to be served is feasible and realistic

- The description of services provided is clear, detailed, and will likely resolve the housing crisis and includes all necessary components of services

- Percent of households stably housed at exit is reasonable, and the additional outcome(s) proposed is tangible and realistic

Capacity

- Staffing and administrative capacity is sufficient to deploy the program without compromising other existing programs of the organization

- Ability to provide in person or face-to-face services

- Experience administering state and/or federal programs

Equity

- Ability to demonstrate culturally appropriate marketing, access, and service to populations systemically impacted by housing instability during COVID

- Ability to work with households experiencing high stress or trauma and/or face discrimination and/or marginalization

- Ability to demonstrate that services will be provided with great respect, dignity, patience, and empathy

- Applicant's leadership, staff, and board reflect the demographics of households served or are structured with staffing to meet the needs of households that otherwise may not be able to resolve their housing crisis without supportive services

- Ability to establish a robust language plan that serves applicants regardless of their spoken or written language

Budget

Budget is clearly explained in the narrative and budget document

- Budget clearly identifies how funds will be managed so that they last for the duration of the grant period

- Budget is reasonable

Review Criteria

Funding selections will not be solely based on the application score. The review committee will also evaluate:

- Minnesota Housing's strategic priorities to provide statewide coverage, and

- Applicant's ability to address equity and community need, especially for populations systemically impacted by housing instability

Application Submission and Timeline

Threshold Criteria

For the application to be considered for funding, the following must be submitted by the deadline: **Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. (noon) CT:**

- Application

- Application signature page

- Budget

- Affirmative Action Certification

- Current financial documentation:

    - Non-governmental organizations only

Threshold Criteria

1. **Application submitted on time**

    Due Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. (noon) CT using Minnesota Housing's Multifamily Secure Upload Tool

2. **Application is signed**

    - PDF copy acceptable

    - Application must be signed to meet threshold criteria

        - A digital, electronic, or wet signature is acceptable

3. **Budget is included**

4. **Affirmative Action** – If your response to this solicitation is or could be in excess of $100,000:

    - Complete the **Affirmative Action Certification** form to determine whether you are subject to the Minnesota Human Rights Act (Minnesota Statutes 363A.36) certification requirement

    - Submit the form even if you are exempt

    - Provide certificate and additional documentation of compliance, if necessary

5. Current Financial Information

All non-governmental organizations applying for $25,000 or more must supply the following financial documentation, depending upon the organization's total gross revenue:

Documentation	Total Gross Revenue
Board-review Financial Statements	Under $50,000 (or not in existence long enough to have completed IRS Form 990 or an audit)
IRS Form 990 and Aging Schedule	$50,000 – $750,000
Certified Financial Audit	Over $750,000

Application Submission

All applications and supporting documentation are due:

Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. (noon) CT

Upload application materials to:

[Minnesota Housing's Multifamily Secure Upload Tool](#)

NOTE: The Secure Upload Tool will direct you to send items to the following email: mhfa.app@state.mn.us.

For more information, review the [Upload Tool Instructions.](#)

RFP Timeline

Date	Activity
Tuesday, January 18, 2022	Request for Proposals (RFP) released
Friday, January 21, 2022	RFP webinar at 2:00 p.m. CT
Tuesday, February 22, 2022	RFP applications due by 12:00 p.m. (noon) CT
Thursday, April 7, 2022	Award letters issued
Tuesday, April 12, 2022	Due diligence webinar
Friday, May 6, 2022	Due diligence materials due
Wednesday, June 1, 2022	**Contracts begin**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Program Guide

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will be posted on Minnesota Housing's web page on the following dates:

  - Thursday, January 27 (including questions from today's webinar)

  - Monday, February 7

  - Final FAQs Tuesday, February 15

- Program Guide coming soon

Questions?

Thank You!

Questions can be directed to Michelle Doyal at:

mhfa.hss@state.mn.us